

Epiphany

January 6 – February 5, 2008

The season of Epiphany is the time in which we celebrate the truth that Jesus came for all people.

The word Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning “showing forth”, “appearance”, “manifestation”, “revelation”. Jesus is the manifestation of God for all people.

Epiphany begins on January 6th (the feast of the Epiphany) and continues until Ash Wednesday. The length of the season changes every year as it is determined by the date of Easter. It may include as many as nine Sundays or as few as four.

The Eve of Epiphany (Twelfth Night) marks the end of the Christmas season. So Christmas is not just one day but a whole season that is always twelve days long.

In 2008 the season of Epiphany will be short because Easter is early. There will be only five Sundays in Epiphany this year. It will begin on Sunday, January 6th and end on Tuesday, February 5th. The last day of Epiphany is always on a Tuesday which is the day before Ash Wednesday which is the beginning of Lent.

The epiphany of Christ to the gentiles is observed on January 6th and is the day that we celebrate the visit of the Wise Men to Jesus and remember their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The season of Epiphany is a time to rededicate ourselves to our own mission and ministry – to continue to spread the light of Christ to the world. The Feast of Epiphany is often the day of ordination to the priesthood and for baptisms.

In some places, there is a great celebration on the last day of Epiphany called either Mardi Gras (French for Fat Tuesday) or Carnival (Latin for farewell to meat). In either case, the idea is that Lent is a time of fasting, so it is appropriate to have one last celebration before the penitential season begins.

Epiphany Themes:

Manifestation of Christ to the World

Baptism – Both Jesus’ baptism and our own – we are called to our vocation as Christians through our baptism

Sacraments as manifestation of Christ

Miracles as signs of Christ’s love for the world

The calling of the disciples and our own calling to be followers of Jesus

Mission and ministry in all of our lives

Holy Days in Epiphany:

January 18 Confession of St. Peter (BCP 187/238)

January 25 Conversion of St. Paul (BCP 187/238)

February 2 Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (BCP 187/239)

Epiphany Colors:

White: The color of celebration for the Feast of the Epiphany and the following Sunday, which is the feast of our Lord’s baptism.

Green: The color of ongoing (growing) life in the church for the rest of the season.

Symbols of Epiphany:

Gold for royalty, wealth, the kingship of Christ

Frankincense, made from gum from an Asian and African tree. It may be burned to produce aromatic smoke used in worship; it symbolizes divinity and prayer

Myrrh, a bitter resin used by people in ancient times to anoint bodies before burial; a symbol of suffering and death, foretelling Christ’s giving of self in death.

The Single Star to recall the manifestation of Christ to the world in the Revelation to the Wise Men.

Living the Epiphany Season at Home and in the Congregation:

- Keep your nativity up until January 6th and move the Wise Men closer and closer each day until they arrive on the Feast of Epiphany.

-Baptism – Be aware of baptisms in this season. Tell stories of your children's and your own baptism. Make gifts for the newly baptized. Candles and small banners with the date are two suggestions. Present each person who is baptized with a "Faith Chest". This could be a large basket or a hand made wooden chest. Fill the chest with articles that will help the newly baptized grow in his or her life with Christ. Suggestions are a candle, a Bible, a music CD of hymns or religious songs. This is can be added to as the child grows.

-Celebration of Gifts – Remember our own and the communities gifts and talents for mission and ministry.

- Serve "King Cake" – Usually a coffee cake type pastry with a small plastic baby baked inside. Whoever gets the baby can either be king or queen for the day and/ or bring the next King Cake. Keep the celebrations going for the whole season of Epiphany.

-Celebrate the many ways in which Christ has been made manifest. Include world mission work, local mission work, Christian education, those who care for invalids at home, the work of the altar guild, the work of our police and fire fighters, people who work hard to keep gardens beautiful. Use your imagination. The list is endless. Just making the list is a practice of Christian mission.

-Have a procession of the Three Kings as part of the Feast of Epiphany celebration. Have the children follow the kings bringing gifts to go to children who are not as fortunate.

- Celebrate Mardi Gras – the last day of Epiphany. Have a pan cake dinner. Order Mardi Gras beads from Oriental Market and be sure everyone wears them. Celebrate your life together in ways that are appropriate for your community.

Epiphany Prayers:

The Epiphany January 6

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen BCP p. 214

First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of our Lord - January 13

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name many keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen

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Second Sunday after the Epiphany - January 20

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. *Amen*

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Third Sunday after the Epiphany- January 27

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*

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Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany – February 3

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives, and reigns with you and the holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever *Amen*

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